

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 5233

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY STOESSEL FROM CHARGE TANGUY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING: UPDATING OF
ASSESSMENT OF US-DUTCH RELATIONS

REF: STATE 231853

1. ASSESSEMENT OF US-DUTCH RELATIONS SUBMITTED IN THE HAGUE 4450
NEEDS TO BE AMENDED TO REFLECT THE TRAUMATIC EFFECT OF THE MIDDLE
EAST CRISIS, PARTICULARLY AT THE ARAB OIL BOYCOTT, ON GON ATTITUDES
AND DUTCH PUBLIC OPINION. BASIC ASSESSEMENT REMAINS VALID WITH
ADDITION OF FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS. SUGGEST IT BE SHOWN TO
AMBASSADOR GOULD FOR ANY COMMENTS HE MAY HAVE.

2. BEGIN TEXT: AS OF NOW THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS HAS HAD A
DISTINCTLY FAVORABLE EFFECT ON US-DUTCH RELATIONS. DURING THE
FIGHTING THE GON, THE GOVERNMENT COALITION PARTIES AND DUTCH PUBLIC
OPINION, THE LATTER TWO DEFINITELY BIASED IN FAVOR OF ISRAEL,
WERE RELIEVED AND GRATIFIED THAT IT WAS THANKS TO PROMPT AND
FIRM US SUPPORT THAT ISRAEL WAS ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE UNIFIED ARAB
ATTACK. OUR UNFLINCHING RESPONSE TO SOVIET THREATS ALSO WENT DOWN
WELL
WITH THE DUTCH, WHO ADMIRE COURAGE AND TOUGHNESS. THE REACTION
OF THE GON AND OF MOST DUTCHMENT TO THE US MILITARY ALERT WAS
PRIMARILY ONE OF UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT, WHICH EXPLAINS WHY THE
NETHERLANDS WAS MUCH LESS NETTLED THAN SOME OF OUR ALLIES ABOUT
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OUR FAILURE TO CONSULT IN ADVANCE.

3. WITH THE IMPOSITION OF THE ARAB OIL BOYCOTT THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM ENTERED A NEW, MUCH MORE ACUTE PHASE FOR THE DUTCH. THEIR INITIAL CONCERN FOR THE FATE OF ISRAEL AND FOR THE THREAT OF WIDER HOSTILITIES ESCALATED INTO SOMETHING MORE IMMEDIATE AND FAR MORE IMPORTANT: DUTCH OIL IMPORTS AND THE VITAL PROCESSES OF THE WHOLE DUTCH ECONOMY. THE MATERIAL ASPECTS OF THE OIL BOYCOTT WERE COMPOUNDED BY POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS. IT BOTHERED THE DUTCH A GREAT DEAL TO BE SINGLED OUT BY THE ARABS FOR ADVERSE TREATMENT AND AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE TO RECEIVE LESS THAN TOTAL UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FROM THEIR EC PARTNERS. THE GON HAS THUS BEEN MOST APPRECIATE OF THE US STEPPING INTO THE BREACH AND OFFERING TO CONSIDER WITH THE DUTCH HOW WE MIGHT HELP THEM WITH THEIR OIL PROBLEM. AT THIS STAGE IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT OUR CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO THEIR PREDICAMENT, FIRST SIGNALLED TO THEM BY SECRETARY SCHLESINGER IN EARLY NOVEMBER AND MADE EXPLICIT AND PUBLIC BY THE SECRETARY ON NOVEMBER 21, HAS REDOUNDED TO THE ADVANTAGE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

4. OFFSETTING THIS SOMEWHAT, THE GON, AND TO A CERTAIN EXTENT ENLIGHTENED DUTCH OPION, HAS A GROWING APPREHENSION THAT THE DUTCH WILL BE FORCED TO CHOOSE, AS ONE EDITORALIST PUT IT, BETWEEN THE US AND EUROPE. THIS IS A CHOICE WHICH THE GON WANTS DESPERATELY TO AVOID. THE DUTCH WERE AMONG THE EARLIEST AND MOST CONVINCED PROPONENTS OF EUROPEAN UNITY AND HAVE CONSISTENTLY WORKED TOWARD THAT GOAL WITHIN BOTH THE ORIGINAL AND ENLARGED EC. FURTHERMORE, THE DUTCH, WITH AN EYE TO THEIR LONGER-TERM INTEREST, DO NOT WANT TO BURN ALL THEIR BRIDGES WITH THE ARABS IF THEY CAN AVOID IT. THE GON IS GENUINELY GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE US HAS DONE SINCE LAST OCTOBER 6, AND PARTICULARLY FOR WHAT IT HAS OFFERED TO DO TO AVERT AN OIL CRISIS IN THE NETHERLANDS. NEVERTHELESS, THE GON WANTS TO AVOID DRAMATIZING A WASHINGTON-THE HAGUE AXIS IN THE DETERMINED HOPE OF MAINTAINING THE ESSENCE OF EC SOLIDARITY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF DUTCH REENTRY INTO THE ARAB WORLD.

5. IN THIS COMPLEX AND EVOLVING SITUATION WE JUDGE THAT THE US INTEREST IN THE NETHERLANDS WILL BEST BE SERVED BY NOT PUTTING THE DUTCH IN A SITUATION WHERE THEY WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE US AND EUROPE. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO

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MAKE CLEAR THAT THERE IS NO REASON THAT THE NETHERLANDS' RELATIONS WITH ITS EC PARTNERS NEED SUFFER AS A RESULT OF THE NETHERLANDS MAINTAINING ITS PRESENT FIRM COURSE AND RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM THE US IF THAT BECOMES NECESSARY. WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND OUR BASIC POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN UNITY AS WELL AS OUR UNDERLYING BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DUTCH. END TEXT.

TANGUY

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